

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T STATE 079887

NODIS

FOL TEL SENT ACTION BSECSTATE FROM BEIRUT DTD 01 APR 1976

QUOTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2866

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE, US

SUBJ: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

1. I'VE SPENT AN EXHAUSTING BUT PERHAPS PROFITABLE DAY,
JETTING AROUND THIS COUNTRY WITH CHOPPER PILOTS WHO FLY CLOSER
TO THE GROUND THAN EVEN KING HUSSEIN. I'M REPORTING
SEPARATELY MY TALKS WITH THE MARONITE LEADERS. I'VE ALSO
TALKED TO SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT AND PRIME MINISTER AS
WELL AS WITH A HOST OF SOLDIERS OF EVERY ILK POSSIBLE.
LEBANESE, AS YOU KNOW WELL LOVE TO TALK AND AT LENGTH
AND SOLDIERS HERE -- OF WHATEVER PERSUASION -- ARE SICK

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OF THE WAR BUT UNABLE TO VERBALIZE POSSIBLE PEACE.

2. CHRISTIANS (AND I SHOULD MAKE THIS CLEAR) I MEAN MARONITES) ARE FRIGHTENED. THERE IS A LOT OF BRAVADO ABOUT FIGHTING FOREVER IN THE MOUNTAINS. I IMAGINE THIS IS POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE WORST. BUT THEY DON'T WANT THAT. THEY WANT THE SYRIANS TO SAVE THEM. EVEN MORE, THEY WANT US TO PROMOTE ACTIVELY THIS POSSIBILITY AND FIND DIFFICULTY IN BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE CAN'T NAIL THE ISRAELIS DOWN. THE THDFD ARE, OF COURSE, AS I'VE POINTED OUT, THE SAME LEBANESE WHO HAVE CONSISTENTLY SAID THAT U.S. CANNOT DICTATE INTERNAL POLICY OF LEBANON, I THINK HOWEVER, I AM STARTING TO GET ACROSS POINT THAT NO ONE DELIVERS ANOTHER'S COUNTRY AND THAT HARD DECISIONS IN

LEBANON CANNOT BE TRANSFERRED TO OUR SHOULDERS. SHOULD, HOWEVER, THIS PLACE COLLAPSE WE CAN BE SURE MARONITES WILL SO RATIONALIZE THAT USG WILL GET BLAME AND, I SUPPOSE, OUR FRIENDS IN WESTERN EUROPE WILL JOIN THE CHORUS. ONE OF PROBLEMS YOU ASKED ME TO LOOK INTO WAS DURABILITY OF CHRISTIANS. THE POLITICIANS GIVE THEMSELVES TEN TO TWENTY DAYS WITH LONGER SURVIVAL ONLY POSSIBLE IF THERE ARE LARGE-SCALE SHIPMENTS FROM WEST. I TALKED TO MARONITE ARMY/NAVY OFFICERS UP TO BRIGADIER LEVEL AT JOUNIEH BASE. THEY ARE LESS DRAMATIC, SAYING THEY HAVE WHAT THEY NEED AND MORE IS COMING. TENTATIVELY, AND I HAVEN'T COUNTED ALL THE ASSETS, I HAVE FEELING THEY ARE NOT BADLY OFF. THEY COULD PROBABLY HOLD OUT INDEFINITELY AGAINST LEFTIST-MOSLEM FORCES ALONE UNLESS FEDAYEEN GAVE THEM ALL OUT SUPPORT.

3. AS OF THIS MORNING I HAD APPOINTMENT WITH JUMBLATT FOR TONIGHT. IT HAS BEEN PUT OFF UNTIL TOMORROW, OSTENSIBLY FOR SECURITY REASONS, I SUSPECT JUMBLATT WANTS ANNOUNCEMENT OF CEASEFIRE TO SINK IN AND NOT HAVE IT RELATED TO US. SO MUCH THE BETTER. TOMORROW I WILL NAIL HIM AS YOU HAVE INSTRUCTED.

4. THERE IS ENORMOUS INTEREST IN MISSION YOU SENT ME ON. IT GIVES LEBANESE SOMETHING ELSE TO THINK ABOUT AND

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THEY ARE EXAGGERATING ITS IMPORTANCE. IT HAS BEEN A QUIETING INFLUENCE ON AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION.

5. SO FAR, SO GOOD.
BROWN UNQTE KISSINGER

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